BA 1608 282. 317 R. Flexman

# A PLAIN ANSWER TO PLAIN REASONS For DISSENTING from the COMMUNION OF THE *CHURCH of* England,

For the USE of the

## LAY NONCONFORMISTS In this KINGDOM.

WITH

An EPISTLE to their TEACHERS.

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*The* SECOND EDITION.

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*Sine ira & ſtudio, quorum cauſas procul habeo.*

EDMUND MASSEY. Tacit. Ann. I.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

# PASTORS *and* TEACHERS

OF THOSE

# CONGREGATIONS

Which SEPARATE themſelves from the

# *CHURCH of* England.

BRETHREN,

ALTHOUGH *the following Anſwer is* chiefly *intended for your* Hearers, *yet I pray favour the* Author *of it with* your *Peruſal: And, for a Dedication to it, I further requeſt of you, to read over a* Sermon of *Mr.* Young's, *late* Dean *of* Sarum, intituled, *A friend-*

*ly Call to our diſſenting* Brethren. *Were* this *Performance anſwerable to* that incomparable Diſcourſe, *you would find your ſelves under a Neceſſity of ſending out* better Reaſons, *than ever yet appeared, for your leaving* our Communion. *However, had I not thought, that what* even *I cou'd offer, would be a ſufficient Refutation of your* plain Reaſons, *I ſhould have employed my ſelf another Way.*

*I have nothing more to add, but my hearty Prayer, That the Love of* God *may conſtrain us to preſerve the* Unity of Faith in the Bond of Peace: *And, that we may duly obſerve and practiſe the moſt pathetical Exhortation of the* Apoſtle, *that ever was made to that Purpoſe:*

Phil. 2. 1, 2, 3. If there be any Conſolation in Chriſt, if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies; fulfill ye my Joy, that ye be like-minded, having the ſame Love, being of one Accord, of one Mind: Let nothing be done through Strife or Vain-Glory, but in Lowlineſs of Mind let each eſteem other better than themſelves.

*I am,*

SIRS,

*Your Well-wiſher in* Chriſt Jeſus.

10 JA 66

A

# Plain ANSWER

TO

# *Plain REASONS*, &c.

THE Pamphlet under Conſideration, has, (if I may believe the Title-Page) already been uſhered into the World in *Thirteen* Editions: So that I look upon it as a valuable Piece among the *Diſſenters*, which has their general Approbation: And leſt they ſhould think it *unanſwerable* alſo, I have given my ſelf and them this Trouble; being more and more confirm'd in an Opinion, that our *Diſſenting* Congregations are in a great meaſure compos'd of the more *ignorant* and *ſuperſtitious* part of Men among us, whom I deny not to have *a Zeal towards God*, but cannot think it *according to Knowledge*.

Were it otherwiſe, they could not be impos'd upon by what that Author calls *plain Reaſons*.

Plain things are commonly beſt, if good in their kind, but theſe *Reaſons* happen to be neither *true* nor *ſufficient* to the Cauſe they are brought to maintain; and why he addreſſes himſelf to the *moderate* Church of *England*-Men I cannot imagine; unleſs by *moderate* he means ſuch Church-men as know not *why* they are ſo, nor *how long* they ſhall continue ſo, and then it will appear that theſe Reaſons are not ſo much for the Defence of his own Party, as an Invitation to others to deſert theirs.

In the Preface the Reaſoner owns, that *Schiſm is an heavy Charge laid upon Diſ-*
Page 3. *ſenters*; *and that many of them know not how to clear themſelves of that Charge.* (An Acknowledgment frank and true enough) *and therefore he deſigns to plead their Cauſe, and inform the more moderate,* as he ſays, *of the Church of* England-men, *that they do not diſſent from the Church of* England, *out of Stubborneſs, or becauſe they love Contention* (either of theſe in his own Senſe would juſtify the Charge) *but from a tender Conſcience,* which it ſeems makes a mighty Alteration in the Caſe. The Words thrown into a Propoſition will ſignify thus much. *A tender Conſcience* takes off or abates the Charge of Schiſm laid upon *Diſſenters* by ſome of the *Church of England.* This is doing Buſineſs, if he can make it out, but
Pſal. xi. 3. if this very *Foundation be deſtroyed, and a tender Conſcience* which is brought to *juſtify*, be found in the Nature of it to *con-*

*demn*

*demn* Separation from a Church that requires no *ſinful Terms* of Communion, and whoſe Articles are agreeable to the Word of God; If this I ſay be made appear, we may hope to ſee the wiſer and more conſiderable among them, return to the Church they have unhappily forſaken.

They who have treated of *Conſcience* have uſually done it ſo magnificently, have given it ſuch great and pompous Titles, as *Domeſtic Deity*, *Tutelar Genius*, *God's Vicegerent*, and the like; that a great many People are made to *wonder* at it, rather than *underſtand* what it really is: and in ſuch Circumſtances they are generally extravagant, and are apt to attribute to it, more than is its due. We will therefore as briefly as poſſible inform our ſelves to what meaſure this diſguiſed overgrown Power is to be reduced, and then enquire into its Qualities, of which we confeſs *Tenderneſs* to be one.

*Conſcience* in a Chriſtian Senſe is a firm Perſwaſion or Belief, that what we do is agreeable to the revealed Will of God, for *Revelation* muſt be the *Rule* of *Conſcience*: So that altho' *Conſcience* muſt approve, yet is it not a *Director* of it ſelf, but tells us only what it has received of another. Hence then it follows, that if *Conſcience* it ſelf is to be *directed* and *governed*, moſt or all of thoſe pompous Conceits muſt vaniſh, that magnify its Power, and make its Authority *uncontroulable*: For want of due Information in this Point, Men have paid too

much Reſpect to themſelves, and by ſuffering their *Conſcience* to *direct* their *Judgment*, 'tis no wonder they ſo much and ſo abſurdly worſhip it, and make their own Interpretation of Scripture *deciſive* and *infallible*: which is directly contrary to the Apoſtles Advice, *Not to think of our ſelves more highly than we ought to think, but to think ſoberly.*

Rom. 12. 3.

In holy Scripture *Conſcience* is called *good* and *evil*, *weak* and *ſear'd*, or *hardned*: and under theſe four Denominations may be reckon'd all ſorts of Conſciences: but it is our preſent Buſineſs to ſee under which we are to place the *tender* (a word as I remember no where joined to Conſcience in Scripture) which our *Reaſoner* affirms is of ſuch Power as to juſtify a Separation of Communion.

I readily allow that a *tender Conſcience*, conſidered as ſuch, is not an *evil* one; and that the meaning of the word is directly oppoſite to *ſear'd* or *hardned*: So that it is to be conſidered, either as *good* or *weak*, that is, either well-informed or miſguided.

Indeed every good Man has ſo much *Tenderneſs of Conſcience*, as to be afraid of Sin; and unleſs the *Reaſoner* means, that *Diſſenters* are the only Men that make, as we ſay, *a Conſcience* of what they do; the *Church of England* ſurely may be preſumed to have as *tender a Conſcience* in that Senſe as they, and as much void of Offence: but then a *tender Conſcience* will not

not be found to be always a *good Conſcience*, they themſelves being Judges; becauſe what is enjoin'd by the *tender Conſciences* of one ſide as agreeable to the Will of God, is deny'd for ſuch by the *tender Conſciences* of the other ſide, and condemn'd and forbidden.

A *tender Conſcience*, as the *Reaſoner* ſays, is *willing to keep the Ordinances*, *&c.* True, but then it may be miſguided and erroneous: Its *Willingneſs* is no ſufficient Security againſt Error; ſo that notwithſtanding a *Willingneſs* to ſerve God aright, that being accompanied with Diffidence and Doubt whether it does ſo, or not, cannot juſtify a Separation from an eſtabliſhed Religion, which they themſelves own in the main to be according to the Will of God. And now remembring that *Conſcience* in a Chriſtian Senſe is a *firm Perſwaſion that what we do is agreeable to the revealed Will of God*; it follows, that a Man of a *good Conſcience* is thus firmly perſwaded, (*Acts* 23. 1.) and that one of a *tender Conſcience*, even according to the *Reaſoner*, is ſuch a Perſon, who is only deſirous to be (but is not ſure that he is) right and honeſt, but if his Parts and Abilities are inſufficient, he will be for all that incapable of himſelf to underſtand his Duty, and conſequently fail in the Performance of it: Beſides his very Willingneſs will make him apt to doubt and fear, thereby making thoſe things *ſinful* to him, which are in their own Nature *free* and *indifferent*. Page 3.

Having

Having thus ſeen what a *tender Conſcience* is, we ſhall proceed with leſs Fear to examine the *Reaſons* it urges in its own Defence; *Date operam & cum ſilentio animadvertite, ut pernoſcatis quod ſibi Eunuchus velit.*

Reaſon 1. p. 4. *We diſſent from the Church of* England, *becauſe we do not look upon it to be ſo pure a Church as ſome others are.*

*Some others* I ſuppoſe means the ſeveral Sects of *Diſſenters* among us; and if this be a *Reaſon*, it is a *Catholic* one, and will equally ſerve any Church againſt another, and *all Churches* againſt their own: But now the *Reaſoner* is to explain what is meant by the *Church of England*; and firſt he tells us what it is not, *viz.* the whole Nation: and who ſays it is? But although it be not the whole Nation, as *whole* conſiſts of every *Individual*, yet it is *the National Church*, modell'd as it now ſtands by holy Men of old, who after the moſt earneſt Addreſſes to Almighty God for the Guidance and Direction of the Holy Spirit, ſeparated and reformed from the Errors of the *Church of Rome*; and was after that guarded and eſtabliſhed by the *Legiſlative Authority* of the *whole Nation*, as they in their united Wiſdom and Counſel thought moſt proper and convenient: But notwithſtanding ſo much Learning and Piety was made uſe of, and ſuch exact Care taken by our Reformers, to make it a *pure* and *holy Church*, theſe Men of *tender Conſciences* are taught by the

the *Reaſoner* in the very firſt place to poſtpone it, to many Aſſemblies much differing from one another, founded only upon private Judgment or Opinion; for this noble Reaſon, *Becauſe they in their tender*, that is, doubting *Conſciences*, do not know, but are pleas'd to imagine, that they are more agreeable to the Will of God, or in their own Words, *they do not look upon it to be ſo pure as ſome other Churches are.* Suitable to the Reaſoning is the hiſtorical part, and this convincing Argument, *becauſe we do not look upon it*, &c. is to be ſupported by Calumny, tho' nothing to the purpoſe, and ſparingly to be made Uſe of in the Cauſe of Truth: It is as follows:

*When many ſpeak of the* Church of England, *they think of nothing elſe but the Place of Divine Worſhip: and they are ſtrengthned in this Error, by the induſtrious Prieſtcraft of deſigning Men, who tell them, that if they leave that Place, they leave the Church of God.* Page 4.

Moſt true it is, that he who forſakes his Pariſh-Church, forſakes the Church of God, becauſe it is a Place dedicated and appropriated to his Honour and Worſhip; wherein the pure Word of God is read and taught, and holy Offices are appointed and performed by lawful Authority; but that it is either preached, or taught, or ſo much as *inſinuated*, that the *Material Building* is the Church of the *New Teſtament*, I utterly deny: But ſuppoſe the Intellectuals

lectuals of ſome People are ſo *tender*, *weak* I would ſay, as to think ſo, with what face can the *Reaſoner* aſſert, that they are ſtrengthned in that Error, by *deſigning Men?* This is a ſly Reflection upon our *Clergy*, whom if any of them were ſo ſilly, I have Reaſon to think he would not fail to nominate and expoſe: If he pleaſes to do ſo, I will pronounce ſuch a Man weak enough to be converted by his *Plain Reaſons*, and become his Proſelyte.

To ſin againſt Knowledge, and to *teach Men ſo*, is ſuch an high pitch of preſumptuous Wickedneſs, that I cannot in Charity ſuppoſe any Body of Proteſtants to have arrived at it. But the *Reaſoner* ſays, *Theſe deſigning Men know that the Greek Word ſo often uſed for Church in the New Teſtament, always ſignifies the People.* Generally indeed it does, but *always* will admit of a Diſpute. *When ye come together in the Church*, ſays St. *Paul* to his *Corinthians*, ch. 1. 11, 18. where perhaps the *coming together* means the People, and the Church *the Place:* Which ſeems to be ſo explained in the Verſe but one following, *When ye come together into one Place*, ver. 20. I do not inſiſt upon this, but only obſerve, that ſince the Matter has, and will bear a Diſpute, the *Reaſoner* ought not to be too poſitive in his Determinations: Nor is it altogether ſo becoming a Man of a *tender Conſcience*, to charge his Brethren with belying theirs, thereby moſt uncharitably upon Surmiſe only ſending them to the Devil, with no very deſi-

rable

rable Company, for *without* (ſays the Text) *are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters, and* whoſoever loveth and maketh a Lye. Rev. 22. 15.

The *Reaſoner* goes on to prove from undoubted Texts, that the true Church cannot be *Brick*, nor *Stone*, nor *Timber*, nor *Mortar*, ſeparately or collectively: Becauſe as he very well obſerves, Bricks eat not: And *Acts* 20. 28. it is ſaid, *Feed the Church:* Stones walk not, *Acts* 15. 23. *being brought on their way by the Church:* Wood ſpeaks not, neither do Men talk to a Poſt: Mat. 18. 17. *Tell it to the Church, and if he neglect to hear the Church:* Nor can all the aforeſaid Materials put together, conſtitute a Natural or Spiritual Body, having Chriſt for its Head, *Col.* 1. 24. *Magna eſt Veritas & prævalebit!* But why all theſe Quotations to no purpoſe, unleſs to make the weak or *tender* Chriſtian believe that Church-men teach another and contrary Doctrine? which I again deny, and affirm in this Point he has no Adverſary to contend with. So much for Negatives. Page 5.

Now for a poſitive Anſwer to *what is the Church.*

1. *The Viſible Church is a Congregation of faithful Men, in the which the pure Word of God is preach'd, and the Sacraments be duly miniſtred according to Chriſt's Ordinance, in* Page 5. Article 19. of the Church of *England.*

*all thoſe things that of neceſſity are requiſite to the ſame.*

From which this notable Obſervation is made: *The Viſible Church is a Congregation*, therefore *not a whole Nation*, or a National Church: Strongly reaſon'd! From whence it follows, as *Lilly* has it——*Tot, quot & omnes à tribus ad centum*, are ſo many viſible diſtinct Churches, becauſe there may be in *England* as many Diſſenting Congregations differing in the way of Worſhip from one another. But how doth this prove that the *viſible* Church is not or cannot be a *National* Church? In all good Senſe ſure the Church eſtabliſhed in any Nation, where all the Members thereof, tho' in diſtinct Pariſhes, aſſemble about the *ſame* time, and worſhip God in the *ſame* manner, and in the *ſame* Words, and uſe the *ſame* Sacraments, and are under the *ſame* Rules and Directions; I ſay, if ſuch Congregations ſo circumſtantiated make not a *viſible National* Church, I own my ſelf at a loſs where to find one. If the *Reaſoner* had conſidered the Article a little better, he would rather have obſerved, that the *due and true Adminiſtration of the Word of God, and the Sacraments*, are the ſurer Marks or Tokens of a viſible Church than its being a *Congregation:* He may as well argue that the *Epheſian* Tumult in the *Acts* was the *viſible Church*, becauſe it was a *Congregation:* nay better, for if I miſtake not, it is called *Eccleſia*; and he has before affirmed the Church *always* to ſignify the *People met together.*

*gether.* Many Congregations with regard to a Church are but one continued Quantity or Company of the Faithful; *We being many are one Body.* And again, *As the Body is one, and hath many Members, and all the Members of that one Body, being many are* but *one Body, ſo alſo is Chriſt.* Add to theſe and many more like Places in holy Scripture the Confeſſion of the *Helvetic* Body, of which the *Diſſenters* uſed to be very fond. Nay, even the *Racovian Catechiſm*, Heretical as it is in other Points of greater Importance, is herein Orthodox, confeſſing all Chriſtian Congregations *throughout the World*, where the Word is rightly preached, to be but one *viſible Church.* As to his Quotations from St. *Cyprian*, and *Juſtin Martyr*, ſince he has not thought fit to let us know where to find them, I almoſt dare venture to affirm, they are either miſunderſtood or miſapplied; and hereafter I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew how little ſtead thoſe Fathers will ſtand him in.

Rom. 12. 5.
1 Cor. 12. 12.
De Eccleſia Chriſti.

2. Since the Article has explained the Church to be a Congregation of Faithful Men, *The Clergy*, ſays *the Reaſoner, know whether they act according to their Article, in admitting none to their Communion but the Faithful, or whether ſaying the Creed wont do.* We gather from the Parables of the *Sower*, the *Marriage of the King's Son, the ten Virgins, &c.* that the *viſible Church* is a mixture of good and bad toge-

ther: Now all are to be eſteemed Members of the Church, and accounted Faithful, ſo long as they make no manifeſt or open Rebellion againſt the Goſpel: And ſince God alone can diſcover the Heart, Man muſt be contented with the Confeſſion of the Mouth: This ſeems to be St. *Paul*'s Mind: *With the*

Rom. 10. 10. *Heart Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs, and with the Mouth Confeſſion is made unto Salvation.* And therefore I think it plain, that a Miniſter ought not to reject a Man who *ſo confeſſes*, becauſe it is in Charity to be preſumed, he *ſo believes.*

*Some who have been ten Years Com-*

Page 6. *municants in the* Church of England, *have declared on their Death-bed, that they knew not what Faith in Chriſt meant, and that their Miniſter never ask'd them a Word about it, but only told them, they ſhould have ſo much Money each time they came there.*

'Tis plain what *Houſes* the *Reaſoner creeps into* to get this *Apocryphal* Information, which I may chuſe whether I will believe or not: However, it may ſo happen, that a *tender conſcienced* Churchman may be at a loſs to define that very Power of Faith which he feels; and it may be that ſuch an Ignorance is preferable to a pretended Knowledge and Acquaintance with the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, that can ſay the Creed after this manner, as ſome have done before: *Faith is the Lullaby of the Soul upon the Boſom of Jeſus Chriſt:* Or, *that God crowns*

*Faith,*

*Faith, becauſe Faith crowns God: If God put a Crown upon Faith, the Modeſty of Faith will come and lay it down at God's Feet*; which is a new Way of crowning, and teaches —— more Merriment than is ſuitable to ſo ſolemn a Subject or Occaſion. *Caſe's* Sermon before the H. of Commons, 1664, *p.* 32.

3. We muſt not yet diſmiſs our Article, *It affirms*, ſays the Reaſoner, *That what they preach muſt be the pure Word of God*; *not an Oration of the excellent Conſtitution of their Church*; *or of Paſſive Obedience*; *or an Exclamation againſt Schiſm* (no to be ſure) *or a Diſcourſe of Morality*; *or only exclaiming againſt ſuch Vices as the very Light of Nature condemns.* Page 6. I always thought the Conſtitution of our Church, which is built upon the *Prophets, and Apoſtles, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner Stone*, Eph. 2. 20. was not only a noble Topic to preach upon, but uſeful alſo, and agreeable to the *pure Word of God*; and, that it was following the Example of the Apoſtles, as they followed Chriſt, to inſtruct the People in Goſpel Duties; of which, I ſtill reckon *Paſſive Obedience* to be one: To warn them againſt *Schiſm*, and the fatal Conſequences of it; and to exhort them to think upon, and put in Practice, *Whatſoever Things are true*; *whatſoever Things are honeſt*; *whatſoever Things are juſt*; *whatſoever Things are pure*; *whatſoever Things are lovely*; *whatſoever Things are of good report*, Phil. 4. 8. But theſe are *quaint Points of Virtue*

*tue and Vice*, as my Author calls them, not fit for ſanctified Souls and Ears. *But you muſt be ſick of Love to Chriſt, O ye Saints! and let him lie as a Bundle of Myrrhe always between your Breaſts: Chriſt is* maxime diligibilis, *as the Schoolmen ſpeak: He is the very Abſtract and Quinteſſence of Beauty: He is a whole Paradiſe of Delight; he is the Flower of* Sharon *inriched with orient Colours, and perfum'd with the ſweeteſt Savour; O! wear this Flower, not in your Boſoms* (they are for the Bundle of Myrrhe) *but in your Hearts, and be always ſmelling to it, and ſhew your Love to this lovely Saviour.* I appeal to the unprejudiced Part of Mankind, whether Diſcourſes of Chriſtian Morality, and Theology, well compos'd, and handſomly deliver'd, are not more likely to reform and inſtruct Men, than ſuch ſweet Stuff? which, in the Metaphor of feeding, is like Surfeiting on brown Sugar; or a confident, or frightful Harangue, concerning the hidden Things of God, and the final State of Believers, which uſually either make Men Preſumptuous, or throw them into Deſpair, in which good Lungs are often miſtaken for ſtrong Argument; and, perhaps, the whole Performance amounts to no more, than *Roaring in the midſt of a Congregation*, Pſal. 74. 4

*Watſon's* Chriſt's Lovelineſs, *p.* 362.

But now *Apoſtoli*, O ye Apoſtles, *loquebantur*, look about ye, the *tender conſcienced*, hard-mouth'd *Reaſoner*, is forming a moſt heavy Charge againſt you; *Impudence*, *Ignorance*, and

and *Immorality*, that's all, ſupported by the Teſtimony of a huge Man, the late Biſhop of *Saliſbury*, in a famous Paragraph of his new Preface. His Words are theſe, *The Ember Weeks are the Burden and Grief of my Life:* Page 7. (no doubt, for who ever thought but ſo much Fleſh muſt hate Faſting?) not ſo much that, but *becauſe the greateſt Part of thoſe who come to be ordain'd, are Ignorant to a degree, not to be apprehended by thoſe who are not oblig'd to know it: The eaſieſt Part of Knowledge is that to which they are the greateſt Strangers. I mean the plaineſt Parts of the Scripture, which they, in excuſe of this Ignorance ſay,* That *their Tutors in the Univerſity never mentioned the Reading of them.* I wiſh our Learning was like our *Coin*, not paſſable unleſs it was *Sterling*; and, that none of the *Candidates* for *Holy Orders* ſhould be admitted without a ſufficient Share of it, proportionate to its Increaſe ſince the *Reformation*: And had the *Biſhop* ſet them aſide, for not being qualified *better* than the *Canon* requires, I ſhould not have blam'd him. But I happen to be acquainted with a *learned Gentleman*, one of thoſe *Ignoramus*'s, whom his *Lordſhip* formerly refuſed to admit into *Holy Orders* for Non-ſufficiency, and ſurely, never *Biſhop* proceeded ſo unjuſtly in a Matter of ſuch Concern. If running from *Geneſis* to the *Revelations*, and asking the Contents of a Chapter, and the Number of Verſes contain'd in that Chapter (grand Points) be fair Examination, and the

eaſieſt

eaſieſt Parts of Knowledge, his *Lordſhip*'s Accuſation is juſt, and his Charge true; if not, Mankind will acquit ſome of thoſe Gentlemen of the Scandal of *Ignorance*, who had ſo awkard a Trial before a partial and unfair Examiner.

Page 8. Nor is it likely they ſhould excuſe their Ignorance in the Scriptures in that manner, *viz.* by pleading the Negligence of their *Tutors* to adviſe and invite them to ſo neceſſary a Study, ſince that is directly oppoſite to their daily Practice, and a flat Contradiction to common Experience. I had ſometime the Honour of being a Member in the *Univerſity*; and upon this Occaſion think my ſelf obliged to do Juſtice to the Gentlemen I knew there, to whoſe Care Students are committed, by affirming, upon my own Knowledge, the conſtant Uſe of Prayer in their Chambers with their Pupils; their repeated Advice to them to ſet apart ſo much Time every Day for the ſeverer Study of the *Word of God*, their Examination of their Proficiency; their Explanation of difficult Paſſages; their being inſtant for their Perſeverance, and their earneſt Deſire of their Continuance in *Well-doing*. This is the Practice of a *Royal College*, and of ſeveral others, upon my own Knowledge alſo. And, I preſume, I may give a Definitive Sentence in favour of all the reſt in the ſame manner, ſince I never heard any Thing to the contrary. Moreover, if publick Prayers Twice every Day; if Lecture Sermons Three Times a Week, beſides

ſides Sunday; if regular and well-order'd Diſputations in *Divinity*, perform'd by learned and godly Men, are not Examples and Admonitions to the Youth under their Care, to apply themſelves to divine Study and Meditation, may his *Lordſhip's* Report gain Credit, and *Cambridge* and *Oxford* ſubmit to *Glaſcow! This*, ſays he, *does often tear my Heart! Theſe things pierce my Soul, and make me cry out, O that I had Wings like a Dove, for then would I flee away, and be at reſt.* And to give him Text for Text, *In the Evening he would return*, &c. But I forbear,——and return to our *Reaſoner*, who ſays, *Some of the Clergy curſe the Biſhop bitterly, for thus expoſing their hateful and ſhameful Ignorance and Idleneſs.* Unleſs he has heard their Profaneneſs, how wicked is this Aſſertion? If he has, where was his *godly Zeal* in making himſelf Partaker of other Men's Sins, by neglecting to admoniſh or rebuke them: But if this Reproach be Invention, or Preſumption, as is ſhrewdly to be ſuſpected, *What ſhall be done unto thee, O thou falſe Tongue?* Pſal. 120. 3. *We believe that Miniſters had better be deficient in human Learning than in the Grace of God; therefore when we chooſe a Paſtor, we do not enquire who ordained him.* From the *Schools* of the *Prophets* in the *Old Teſtament*, and the Care taken of their *Education*, and the Choice which God himſelf made of *ſuch Men ſo educated*, to

Pſal. 59. 6.

Page 7.

Page 9.

go from him upon *extraordinary Occaſions*; we gather, that *acquired Abilities* do no ways hinder, but invite the *Infuſion of Grace*; and that the Stock ſo prepared by *Induſtry* is fitteſt to be grafted on by *Inſpiration*. This proves what I have ſaid before, that theſe Reaſons were calculated for all manner of *Diſſenters*, as well *Quakers*, *Independents*, &c. who allow of no *Ordination*, and cry down human Learning for *carnal Knowledge*; as *Presbyterians*, who have a Form of one: but why not that Queſtion? 'Tis a very material one. The *tendereſt Conſcience*, which may be alſo a very *ignorant* one, underſtands this, that a Man cannot give what he has not: *How can they preach*, ſays the Apoſtle, *except they be ſent?* Which makes it plain to the loweſt Capacity, That he who ſets up for a *Publick Teacher*, ought to have a *lawful Commiſſion*, which the *Presbyterians* allow: So that I imagine the *Reaſoner* to be of no body's Calling but his own; one who has preſumptuouſly thruſt himſelf into a *Prieſt's Office*, perhaps, *to eat a Piece of Bread*.

Rom. 10. 15.

1 Sam. 2. 36.

But of all Mankind they have the greateſt Confidence, who being Men of *tender Conſciences*, ſet up for *Teachers* and *Diſputers* for Opinions. For a *Conſcience truly tender*, will be fearful openly to contradict Authority, and will rather conclude that it is its Duty to *obey* than *diſpute*.

*We*

*We diſſent from the* Church of England, *becauſe we cannot take the Common-Prayer Book for our Rule of Worſhip*; 1. *Becauſe it orders the reading much of the Apocrypha.* A very ſlender Reaſon this, when our *Church* has taken ſuch eſpecial Care, that her Children ſhall not be miſled by any thing therein contain'd, which is of *queſtionable Authority:* For her Intent in Reading it, is the ſame with the Author in Writing it, of whom his Grand-Son ſays, *When he had given himſelf much to the Reading of the Law, and the Prophets, and other Books of our Fathers, and had gotten therein good Judgment, was drawn on alſo himſelf to write ſomething pertaining to Learning and Wiſdom, to the intent that thoſe which are deſirous to learn, and are addicted to theſe things, might profit much more in living according to the Law:* And our Church, in her *6th* Article declares, That ſhe doth read them for *Example of Life, and Inſtruction of Manners*, but *doth not apply them to eſtabliſh any Doctrine.* Beſides, the Apocryphal Books being *Memoirs* of holy Men and Women in the *Old Teſtament*, our *Church* has prudently enough appointed them as fit to be read when we commemorate the *Heroes* of the *New:* Thereby animating her Sons to a laudable Imitation; owning her Agreement in the *ſame Faith* with the *Martyrs* and *Confeſſors* of the *Jewiſh Church:*

Reaſon 2.

Prologue of the Wiſdom of Jeſus the Son of *Sirach.*

which Recital was very early in the Church, and uſeful, till at laſt, as moſt good Cuſtoms have been, it was abominably perverted, *Hiſtorical Facts* degenerating into *Scandalous Legends*, for which Reaſon it was wholly forbidden by Pope *Gelaſius*, *A. D.* 492. But if ſuch Conſequences attend not Reading theſe Writings now, I cannot ſee how they can give Offence any more than other *human Compoſitions* may. And I wou'd ask the *Reaſoner*, whether he himſelf can give us a better Syſtem of Morality, or preach better Divinity, or relate the wonderful Works of Providence, or ſet out the Actions of famous Men, more judiciouſly and induſtriouſly, than the Wiſdom of *Solomon*, or the Son of *Sirach* does?

2. *Becauſe it appoints all Perſons religiouſly to obſerve an hundred and fifty Days in the Year as holy Time, beſides all Sabbath-days.* This is falſe in Fact, for the *Church* enjoyns not ſo many by two Thirds, if we take *State-Holidays* and all into the Account. Our *Reaſoner's* Quotation of St. *Paul* is thoroughly miſapply'd, *Ye obſerve Days and Times, and Months and Years*, Gal. 4 10. A little ſhare of Conſideration would plainly have ſhewed him that the *Apoſtle* levelled his Reproof againſt the *Gentile* and *Jewiſh* Cuſtoms: *Days lucky* or *unlucky*, was *Paganiſm*: *New Moons* and *Sabbatical Years* was *Judaiſm*: and the *Galatians* were *converted Gentiles*, at that time *perverted* by the *Jews*; So that, as I before ſaid, the *Apoſtles* Reproof is levelled againſt the

*Heathen*

*Heathen* Obſervation of *Fortunate* and *Unfortunate* Days, which they eaſily run back into, after the *Jews* had perſwaded them to the Obſervation of *New Moons* and *Sabbaths*: But this is nothing to *Chriſtian Inſtitutions*; nor can we bring them under the *Apoſtles* Cenſure, by any fair Conſtruction, for we do not obſerve *Months* and *Years* at all; and when the *Apoſtle* wrote this Letter, which was in the *Infancy* of the *Church*, 'tis not probable that many other Days and Times were obſerved by *Chriſtians* than the *Lord's Day*, and thoſe Times of the *Birth*, *Paſſion*, *Death*, *&c.* of our *Saviour Chriſt*, which he is ſo far from condemning, that he poſitively enjoins the Obſervation of them. See St. *Ambroſe upon the Place, and the judicious Mr. Hooker, in his Ecc. Pol.* 5. 69.

3. *Becauſe thereby are impoſed on all Miniſters Forms of Prayers: If it be granted (as we think there is no Reaſon) that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt made a Form of Prayer for his Diſciples, to be uſed Word for Word without alteration: Yet, by what Rule do any Men ſo for others, and then impoſe them upon them for their conſtant Uſe?* By the Example of our *Saviour*, whoſe *Authority* is delegated to his *Succeſſors*, and by virtue of an *apoſtolical Canon*, enjoyning, That *all Things be done decently, and in order*, 1 Cor. 14. 40. according to the Direction of our *Eccleſiaſtical Superiors*. And, if *Origen* held the *Lord's Prayer* to be a *Rule* to direct us in Prayer, as the *Reaſoner* owns, *He* and *I* are both of a Side, for

that

that is, I think, owning a *Form of Worſhip* to be of *Chriſt's Inſtitution.* In his 6th Book againſt *Celſus*, he ſpeaks of the εὐχαὶ προσλαχθεῖσαι, then in Uſe, which I tranſlate *ſet, or aſſigned Forms of Prayer.* St. *Auguſtine* ſays, Thoſe Men are not our Brethren, who ſay not, *Our Father who art in Heaven:* And our *bleſſed Lord* plainly ſhew'd, that He ſet forth *that Prayer* as a *Model*, or *Form*, both for publick and private Uſe. This Prayer is twice repeated in the Goſpel; the firſt Time it is authoritatively enjoyn'd, the ſecond it is repeated at the Diſciples requeſt. The Commemoration of the *Kingdom*, and eternal *Power* of God, was, in the *Jewiſh* Church, the *Antiphon*, or *Reſponſe* of the People, after the Prieſt had done praying, as it is at preſent in the *Romiſh:* So that our Saviour's ſubjoyning this Doxology, *viz. For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory*, &c. ſhew'd that *Form* to be for publick Uſe, as the manner of the *Temple* then was: But when His Diſciples ask'd him to teach them to pray privately, He gives them the *ſame Prayer* without the Doxology, after the *Jewiſh* Cuſtom, which was, in private, to uſe it only *mentally*: Add to all this, That the Diſciples asked *Jeſus* to teach *them* to pray, as *John* taught *his* Diſciples; which was like the reſt of the *Rabbi*'s, to give them a *Form* to uſe *daily*, *verbatim*, in *expreſs Terms. The Spirit of Grace and Supplication*, Zech. 12. 10. is utterly miſunderſtood by the *Reaſoner*; for the following Words, *They ſhall*

*look*

*look on me whom they have pierced*, do ſhew, That they have no manner of regard to any Thing, but the Repentance and Reſtoration of *Jeruſalem*, by the Grace of God, and their returning to him with (not *extempore*) *Supplications*. The Prophet is prophecying of the Return of *Judah*, and the Repentance of *Jeruſalem*, and ſays, *Zech.* 12. 10. *In that Day I will pour upon the Houſe of* David, *and upon the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *the Spirit of Grace and of Supplication, and they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son, and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt Born.* If *Grace* and *Supplication* here belong to *extempore Prayers*, ſo muſt *Mourning* and *Bitterneſs* likewiſe, and that in ſuch a lamentable manner, as plainly, at preſent, is applicable to no Body of Diſſenters in the World; for, ſays the Text, *All the Families of them ſhall mourn greatly, every Family apart, and their Wives apart.*

Now for a notable Piece of *Reaſoning*, *If we tye up our ſelves to Forms, how can we ſay with St.* Paul, *Rom.* 8. 26. *We know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: They that pray by a Book know to a Word what they ſhou'd pray for.* Take the whole Verſe and judge: Likewiſe alſo *the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities: For we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it ſelf maketh Interceſſion for us.* Wherein? not ſo much in diſcovering

to

to us *what we want*, as *how*, and in *what manner*, we ſhould ask for it. *As we ought*; that is, *in verbis digne conceptis*, in proper Language; but ſince it is not in Man, with all his Knowledge, and Eloquence, and Premeditation, to ſpeak any Thing worthy of God to hearken to (much leſs when he talks *at Random*) therefore it follows, *The Spirit maketh Interceſſion for us.* The *Emphaſis* is not upon, *what we ſhould pray for*, but upon, *as we ought.* The Original runs thus, *What we ſhould pray as we ought, we know not*, which has no reference to the Matter of our Petitions, but to the *Manner*, the *Language*, in which we offer them to God: Let us leave out the Word *for*, which is not in the *Greek*, and the Text can have no other Interpretation than what I contend for, namely, Our Incapacity to make a Petition to God, in Words, worthy of *themſelves*, to be brought before the Lord. I can ſcarce help thinking but the *Reaſoner* knows this, and then his Divinity is a *pious Fraud*, which none but a *Church* he pretends to abominate, will practiſe and juſtify; I mean the *Church* of *Rome*; and how he approves of ſuch Methods, the Three perverted Texts under this ſecond *Reaſon* do ſufficiently ſhew.

*We never read in all the Word of God, of any ſuch Cuſtom as praying by Book, tho' we read of the Prayers of Abraham, Jacob, Job, Moſes, Samuel, &c.* What then? If the People were taught, and got by heart what they ſhould pray,

pray, is not that all one as praying by *Book*, or *Form?* The Men he inſtances in were moſt of them divinely *inſpired*, and what they *ſo* utter'd was not *pro re nata* only, but to *remain* among their Hearers, to be made uſe of by them and their Poſterity. See *Deut.* 31. 22. 2 *Kings* 17. 28. 1 *Chron.* 23. 13. When the People were thus taught to ſay their Devotions by Heart, what need of Books? Which our *Reaſoner* very judiciouſly remarks, *they did not pray by*, becauſe *when they pray'd, their Eyes were either clos'd, or lifted up to Heaven*; his Inſtance of *Jonah* he is pretty ſafe in; and, I readily allow, He could not well *pray by Book* in the Place of his Confinement, and, perhaps, his Eyes might be cloſed too, conſidering the little Uſe he had for them, and the Saltneſs of the Water.

*The Hiſtory of the Three firſt Centuries*, ſays the *Reaſoner*, *ſpeaks not one Word of impoſed Prayer*, &c. What Hiſtory is that? I am ſure *Tertullian*, whom I take to be a Father of the firſt or ſecond Century, ſays, That our *Lord* appointed his Diſciples of the New Teſtament, a *new Form of Prayer*: *Novam Orationis formam determinavit*; and St. *Cyprian*, whom I look upon to be another, ſays, *Chriſt* himſelf gave us a *Form of Prayer*: And theſe two poſitive Teſtimonies may, I think, for the preſent, ſtand good againſt an uncertain Paſſage of I know not what

De Orat. Dom.

De Orat.

*Hiſtorian*, till the *Reaſoner* pleaſes to tell us his Name.

*The Forms of Prayer, and Book of Homilies, were both compos'd to help the poor Tools of Prieſts, at our firſt coming off from Popery:* As they now ſtand 'tis true, but this Aſſertion ſeems to point out the *beginning* of *Forms* of *Prayers* and *Homilies* to have been at the *Reformation*; whereas it is manifeſt both the *one* and the *other* were in uſe in the Church long before; the one he *himſelf* acknowledges, by contending juſt now againſt *impoſed Forms* for the Three firſt *Centuries*. And, as for *Homilies*, or *Sermons*, they are of very antient Uſe in the Church, for in the Year 444 we find it an Order of *Council*, *That if the* Prieſt *be ſick, or any Way hinder'd from Preaching in his* own Perſon, *one of the* Deacons *ſhou'd read a* Homily, *or* Sermon, *of ſome of the* Holy Fathers: So that the firſt Uſe of them was *caſual*, and that at the *Reformation neceſſary*; and ſince they now are to be diſcretionally us'd, as injoyn'd by *publick Authority*, I think it an *high Preſumption* in the *tender conſcienced Reaſoner* thus to declaim againſt them, as *deſtructive* of Men's doing their Duty, daring to oppoſe his *private, ill deeming Opinion*, to the *Wiſdom* of the moſt *publick* and authoritative *Aſſembly* in the Nation.

Concil. Vaſen.

You ſee our *Reaſoner* begins to triumph, and having, as he thinks, behav'd himſelf valiantly, and diſarm'd his Opponents, he can't for-

forbear inſulting, witneſs his mannerly Expreſſion; in calling the Clergy *poor Tools*, — *Non ut maledicas ſed ut pugnes* — And then to ſhew his Gallantry, he returns his Adverſary his *Sword* and *ats* him again: He takes off all Objections, as the *Man* at the *Globe* anſwers all *lawful Queſtions*; both of them, I confeſs, with an *uncommon Capacity*, above the reach of *ordinary Pretenders*.

Object. 1. *That Promiſe of the Help of the Spirit of God in Prayer, is to raiſe our Affections, and to draw out Grace to its Exerciſe in Prayer.* This muſt be Conjuring, becauſe I don't underſtand one Word of it, and ſo wont pretend to ſay any Thing to it, till I clap a Lamp at my back Door, and ſet up for a *Philomath*.

Object. 2. *The Way of praying by Book hath been of very long ſtanding in the Church.* Ay, ſays the *Reaſoner*, *But the Way that Diſſenters take in Prayer hath been us'd* 2000 *Years before ever there was a Book in the World.* I'm afraid this will want proof, *For* Moſes *was learned in all the Wiſdom of the* Egyptians, long before the *Delivery of the Law*, which is computed but at 2000 Years, or thereabouts, from the Creation; and the *Egyptians* themſelves were famous in their learned Men ſome Hundreds of Years *before that*. And whether they deliver'd their Inſtruction in *writing*, or *Hieroglyphick*, it matters not; for whatever teaches is a Book, whether *natural* or *artificial*; beſides, if *Abraham*, &c. did teach their Children, by

Acts 7. 22.

putting Words into their Mouths, 'tis a ſufficient Proof for Forms, and the *Reaſoner's* confident *Boaſting* muſt end in a diſappointment.

Object. 3. *But when we addreſs our ſelves to God we ſhould uſe the moſt decent Expreſſions. That's true*, ſays the *Reaſoner*; *but it is the Heart, not fine Words, that God looks at; if that be right God will overlook a hundred Slips of the Tongue, and hear Prayer, tho' it be as* Hezekiah's, *like the chattering of the* Crane *or a* Swallow, (Iſa. 38. 14.)

Surely there has not been ſuch *Expoſer of Texts* ſince the Time of *Scotch Eloquence* unto this Day. *The chattering of the* Crane *and* Swallow, ſignify not the *Imperfections of Prayer*, but *the Diſtreſs of the Man. Hezekiah* was very ſick, even unto Death, and in this Condition he compares his Prayers to the *chattering of the* Crane *and* Swallow; not for the *Incoherence* of them, but the *Sadneſs*, the *Moan* that he pour'd forth unto God in the *Bitterneſs of his Soul.* The *Note* of the *Swallow* was, among the *Antients*, the *Emblem of Sorrow:*

——— *Flebiliter gemens*
*Infœlix avis* ———

Hor. Od. lib. 4. Od. 12.

So that had our *Reaſoner* underſtood either *Scripture*, or *profane Hiſtory*, he cou'd not but have avoided ſo *egregious a Miſtake.* Or, if he had conſider'd the Cauſe he was to de-

fend,

ſend, ſurely he wou'd not have thought it adviſeable to give up ſo *grand a Point*, by owning that his *extempore Effuſions* are both *impertinent and ſad: If ye offer the Blind for Sacrifice*, ſays God, *is it not evil? And if ye offer the Lame and Sick is it not evil? Offer it now to thy Governor* (ſee Diſſenters Addreſſes to the King) *will he be pleaſed with thee, or accept thy Perſon? ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* (Mal. 1. 7.) It is not with *publick* as with *private Prayer*; in this, that is, in *private Prayer*, rather *Secrecy* is commanded than *outward Shew*; whereas, the *other*, that is, *publick Prayer*, being the Act of a whole Society together, requires, accordingly, more Care to be had of *external Appearance*. The Worſhip of God is the moſt *reaſonable Service* in the World, and it is a Part of rational Worſhip, that it be done in the *beſt* Manner, and with the moſt ſignificant Signs of Honour that can be: For this Reaſon it was, that in the old Teſtament God expected that whatever was offered in Sacrifice to Him, ſhould be the *beſt* of the Kind, the *firſt Fruits* of the Ground, and the *fatteſt* of the Flock; otherwiſe the Oblation was an Offence, and rejected: For the ſame Reaſon, our Houſes dedicated to God ought to be built with the *beſt* Materials, and beautified with the *nobleſt* Ornaments; and the Offices therein uſed ſhould be the *beſt* compoſed, and moſt ſignificant of Honour to our Creator that we can frame: That is, our Prayers and Praiſes

ſhould

ſhould be offered up in the *beſt* Language, and moſt devout Manner; not in haſty *extempore* Effuſions, wherein it often happens, that indecent, vulgar, and unmannerly Expreſſions, ſuch, with which Men would be aſhamed to fill a Petition to an earthly Prince, are offered to God, and obtruded upon the People.

The Heathens, tho' they miſtook the true Object of Worſhip, yet in as much as they performed their Devotions with the *beſt* Muſick, both of Voice and Inſtrument, with their *beſt* Compoſitions both of Proſe and Verſe; ſo far, I ſay, and in this reſpect, their Way of Worſhip (otherwiſe very ridiculous) was *reaſonable*. And ſhall we Chriſtians, who know whom we worſhip, and have the true God for our Object, be leſs reſpectful than the Heathens in theſe Circumſtantials of Religion? No! Thanks be to God, *We have not ſo learned Chriſt*: We do not place the *Beauty of Holineſs* in thoſe Circumſtantials of Religion, excluſive of the inward Piety of the Soul, and Pureneſs of Life; but only ſay, Reaſon dictates that in Religious Worſhip (tho' the Purity of the Heart be that alone which can render it acceptable to God) yet we ſay Reaſon dictates, That in all our Addreſſes we ſhould do our Maker all the Honour we are able, which we do not, unleſs we do it in the moſt exact Manner poſſible. And the Manner of performing Religious Worſhip, when it is expreſſive of, and proceeds from an inward Piety, is not ſo in-

dif-

different a Thing in the ſight of God, as the *Reaſoner*, and ſome ſlovenly Chriſtians, have imagined: We are to *preſent our Bodies*, as well as Souls, *unto God*, which the Apoſtle tells us, *is our reaſonable Service*; and this inſtructs us to uſe a *lowly* Behaviour, and *decent* Geſture, before him. We are to *Honour God with our Subſtance*; and one Branch of this is, to come before Him in *comely* Ornaments, and *elegant* Apparel; and if we are to Honour Him with our Mouth, ſurely the *juſteſt* Expreſſions, and *beſt* compoſed Words, will be found to be the reaſonable Service required.

Object. 4. *Diſſenters are liable to vent falſe Doctrines by their Way of Preaching.* The *Reaſoner* is almoſt a-ground; for now he leaves Argument, and flyes to *Recrimination*, which is pleading *Guilty* to the Charge, and only ſaying, I don't care, if I am a ——, ſuch a one is as great a —— as I; *For*, ſays he, *ſo may thoſe who keep ſtrictly to a Form; witneſs their daily Petition, Remember not, Lord, the Offences of our Fore-fathers: It looks like praying for the dead:* Not half ſo much as he ſeems to be a *Papiſt*, by his Ignorance of the *ſecond Commandment*; where God declares he will *viſit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation*; and therefore it is, that we pray to God *not to remember them*, &c. upon us their Poſterity.

Object. 5. *Diſſenters Prayers are often incoherent: So may Forms be too*, ſays the *Reaſoner*. Take an

an Inſtance. *Almighty and everlaſting God, who alone workeſt great Marvels, ſend down upon our* Biſhops *and* Curates, *the healthful Spirit of thy Grace. Muſt we ſay it wou'd be a great Marvel if God ſhou'd ſend down his Grace on Biſhops and Curates?* None but the *tendereſt Conſcience*; that is, the *weakeſt Underſtanding*, can think ſo; the Preamble of that *excellent Collect* has a plain View to the Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt* upon the *Apoſtles* at the *Day of Pentecoſt*, which was the greateſt *Marvel*, or *Miracle*, that ever was: And when we pray for the *ſame Spirit* on the *Apoſtles Succeſſors*, nothing ſo proper, ſure, as to remember *that Deſcent*, which is the plain Meaning of thoſe Words.

Object. 6. *For want of a Form, Diſſenters Prayers are ſometimes very unintelligible, the People know not what they intend by ſome of their Petitions: So may ſet Forms too*, quoth the *Reaſoner*; and inſtances in one of the *plaineſt* in the *Common Prayer Book*, viz. *Almighty God, who knoweſt our Neceſſities before we ask, and our Ignorance in asking*, &c. To explain which wou'd be to offer an Injury to the common Capacity of Mankind.

Object. 7. *Diſſenters are often guilty of Tautologies, or Repetition of the ſame Thing.* I don't deny it, ſays the *Reaſoner*, *but not half ſo often as they who uſe a Form; for they uſe the ſame Petition ſix, eight, ten, or twenty Times over: Lord have Mercy upon us, We beſeech thee*

to

*to hear us good Lord: We beſeech thee to hear us good Lord*; and, *Lord have Mercy upon us*, &c. Herein we follow the Example of the *Angels*, *in* Iſa. 6. 3. and the *Elders* in the *Revelation*, *ch.* 4. And our *Litany*, where theſe Repetitions do oftenеſt occur, being the more *fervent* Part of our Devotion, we truſt we follow likewiſe the Example of our *Saviour Chriſt*, who being *exceeding ſorrowful*, *went away again*, *and pray'd the* third *Time*, *ſaying the* ſame *Words*, Matth. 26. 44.

Object. 8. *The Prayers of the Church were compoſed by wiſe and learned Men*, *that better knew the Work and Nature of Prayer than we do.* How *great*, ſays the *Reaſoner*, or *wiſe*, or *learned the Compoſers were*, *we matter not*; *for tho' they were Apoſtles*, *or Angels of God*, *if they bring us any Rules of Faith or Practice*, *that have not the Stamp of the Wiſdom of Jeſus Chriſt upon them*, *we cannot*, *we dare not receive them.* But whether this be anſwering the Objection, ſince he has not proved the Facts, I leave to any honeſt *Diſſenter* to determine. He ought to ſhew in *what Points* the *Church of England* has *perverted* the *Faith*, and tell us, *how* thoſe *Rules of Practice*, which ſhe lays down, are *erroneous*; otherwiſe the Objection is in full force, and unanſwered. In the mean Time I muſt acquaint the *Reaſoner*, That what *wiſe* and *learned* Men, *authoritatively commiſſion'd*, have injoyn'd us for our Practice, has the *Authority* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and it becomes our *Duty* to *receive* and *practiſe*, as they appoint, *Luke* 10. 16. *He that heareth*

*you heareth me, and he that deſpiſeth you deſpiſeth me.*

Reaſon 3. *We cannot joyn with the Church of* England *in the Order for Baptiſm.*

1. *We except againſt that Human Ordinance, ſigning with the Croſs, as a Popiſh Invention.* I am apt to think our *Reaſoner* is impos'd upon by the third of *May*, which is a *Popiſh Holy Day* for the *Invention of the Croſs*, not the Baptiſmal one, but *that* on which our *Saviour ſuffer'd*: The *Sign of the Croſs* in *Baptiſm* was in Uſe long before *Popery* had a Name: His beloved *Origen* mentions it in one of his Homilies on the 38th *Pſalm.* And before him, *Tertullian* ſays it was a received Cuſtom among *Chriſtians*, frequently to mark themſelves with the *Sign of the Croſs.* 'Tis thought to be an Alluſion to an *Eaſtern* Cuſtom, of Marking *Servants* and *Soldiers* in their *Hands* and *Foreheads*; *Thou ſhalt bind them for a Sign upon thine Hands, and they ſhall be as Frontlets between thine Eyes*, Deut. 6. 8. And we read in the *Revelations* of the *Servants of God being ſeal'd in their Foreheads*: ch. 7. 3. & 14. 1. And what more proper, when we are *baptized* into *Chriſt's Death*, than to be *ſign'd* with a *Croſs*, as a Token that we will not be aſham'd *publickly* and *openly* to profeſs *Chriſt crucified*, and with St. *Paul*, *Glory in the Croſs?* And therefore it is that we receive this Sign in the *Forehead*, both alluding to the *Eaſtern* or *Angelick* Cuſtom;

De Corona Militis.

and

and alſo, becauſe it is the Seat of *Modeſty*, and we profeſs we will not be aſhamed of it: *In fronte tanquam, in ſede pudoris ſignum Crucis accepiſti.* Our *Church* makes not the *Croſs eſſential* to *Baptiſm*, for the Child is *fully baptized*, before it receives the Sign of the Croſs; but only, when we receive it into the Congregation of *Chriſt*, we mark him for His Servant, after the Example of *God* in the *Old Teſtament*, and the Practice of the *Saints* and *Angels* in the *New*, as appears from the late mentioned Texts. If it be right, to argue from the *Abuſe* of Things to the *Diſuſe* of them, we muſt not leave the *Sun* in the *Firmament*, for the *Pagans* have *adored* it; nor any *eminent Creature* upon *Earth*, for they have *all* been made *Objects* of *Divine Worſhip*; nor any *Herb* in the *Field*, for the *ſame* Reaſon: Nay, the *Virtues* of Mankind muſt be put away, as well as the *Vices*, foraſmuch as *Temples* and *Altars*, and *Prieſts* and *Sacrifices*, have been appointed to *them all*. We allow, That the *Croſs* in *Baptiſm* is only a *decent Ceremony*, neither uſed in *Faith*, nor made *Sacramental*: And I wonder, how they who plead for its Diſuſe, becauſe of *Popery*, will endure to wear it in their *Pockets*, or ſuffer its continuance in their *Shop Books*.

Aug. Serm. 20. in verb. Apoſt.

2. *By the Form of Baptiſm in the Church of* England, *Parents are not ſuffer'd to covenant with God for their own Children.* This is an Argument of the *Care* and *Tenderneſs* of our

*Church*, that omitting the Parents (who are ſuppos'd *naturally* to conſult the *ſpiritual Welfare* of their Children) ſhe requires, moreover, *Sureties* for the good Improvement of her Child; but it cannot be *imputed to her*, if theſe *Guardians* are *ungodly*, or *negligent* in their Duty, ſhe gives them their *Charge*, and they are to look to the *Execution* of it.

3. *What they promiſe in the Child's Name, is, To renounce the Devil and all his Works*, &c. *which, ſays the* Reaſoner, *is in the Power of no Creature in Heaven or in Earth to perform.* Not of *himſelf*, but by the *Grace* of *God* ſtrengthening and aſſiſting him he may, which the Church of *England* ſuppoſes in thoſe very Anſwers which ſhe teaches her Child to make; for in the *Catechiſm*, when the Child is asked, Whether he *thinks himſelf bound to believe and do* as his *God-Fathers and God-Mother have promiſed for him*, the Anſwer is, *Yes verily, and by God's Help ſo I will.*

4. *We ſee no Reaſon to believe, that every Child baptiz'd with Water, is alſo regenerated by the eſpecial Grace of God, as is expreſſed in the Order for Baptiſm*: viz. *We call upon thee for this Infant, that he coming to thy Holy Baptiſm, may receive Remiſſion of Sins by ſpiritual Regeneration. Regeneration*, if I underſtand it rightly, comprehends theſe two Things, *Remiſſion of Sins*, and *putting on Chriſt.* If I prove *both theſe* to be done by Baptiſm, then every baptiz'd Child is regenerate, notwithſtanding the *Reaſoner's Belief* to the *contrary.* In *Acts* 2. 27.

St.

St. *Peter* exhorts the *Jews* to be *baptiz'd* in the Name of *Jeſus* for the *Remiſſion of Sins*, and thereupon promiſes them the *Gift* of the *Holy Ghoſt*. This is one Branch of *Regeneration by Baptiſm*. The *other* I prove by St. *Paul* to the *Gal.* 3. 27. *As many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.* And in another Place, *Tit.* 3. 5. *The ſame Apoſtle directly* calls *Baptiſm the waſhing of Regeneration.* And I am miſtaken, if either Scripture, or ſcriptural Men, have not called the Font, the *Laver of Regeneration.* 'Tis true, in the *Communion Office* we profeſs *Chriſt's meritorious Croſs and Paſſion to be that* whereby *alone* we obtain *Remiſſion of Sins.* And this, ſays the *Reaſoner*, *is the Word of God, and not by Water Baptiſm, nor by Spiritual Regeneration:* And hence he takes Occaſion in his way, to call the *Reverend*, and moſt *Reverend Compilers* of the *Common Prayer*, *groſs Blunderers*; but let him be pleaſed to be inform'd, That *Water Baptiſm* is a *Memorial* of our *Saviour's Death and Paſſion*, and is a *Part* of it; for this is *He*, ſays St. *John*, *That came by Water as as well Blood*, alluding to the *piercing of his Side*, whence forthwith there came out *Blood and Water.* So that to profeſs *Remiſſion of Sins* by *Baptiſm*, and by the *Croſs and Paſſion of Chriſt*, is but *two Branches* of the *ſame Thing*, and ſo our *Reaſoner* muſt take his *groſs Blunder* again, it will ſit eaſier on him than on thoſe *old Gentlemen*, for (ſaith my Author) *nothing is heavy in its proper Place.* 1 Ep. 5. 6.

5. *It*

5. *It is not clear to us, nor can they ſhew it in the Word of God, that Children baptized, and dying in their Infancy, before they commit actual Sin, are undoubtedly ſaved.* I cannot help their Underſtanding; but if *Baptiſm* confers upon Infants *Remiſſion* of *Original Sin*, and cauſes them to *put on Chriſt*, and makes them of the Number of the *Regenerate*, and places them in God's Favour; I am ſure it is a wicked *Blaſphemy*, or thinking *unworthily* of *God*, to aſſert, or ſurmiſe otherwiſe, than that of *ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Reaſon 4. *We cannot joyn with the Church of* England *in the Lord's Supper,*

1. *Becauſe they order every one to kneel at the Receiving it.* It may be ſufficient to ſet forth in the Words of the *Church*, her *Proteſtation* relating to this Affair; at the end of the Communion Office ſhe ſays, *Whereas it is ordain'd in this Office, of the Adminiſtration of the Lord's Supper, That the Communicants ſhould receive the ſame Kneeling*, &c. *yet, leſt the ſame Kneeling ſhould by any Perſon, either out of Ignorance and Infirmity, or out of Malice and Obſtinacy, be miſconſtrued, and depraved; it is here declared, That thereby no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread or Wine, there bodily received, or unto any Corporal Preſence of Chriſt's natural Fleſh and Blood*, &c. And now, what will our Diſſenters ſay, when they underſtand that the Poſture of *ſitting*

*ting* was introduced by the *Arians*, who denied our *Saviour's Divinity*; and, that Kneeling is ſo far from *Popery*, that the *Pope* himſelf always *ſits* when he receives the Sacrament? The Example of our *Lord* and his *Apoſtles* proves *nothing* by proving *too much*; for, if like them, we muſt *ſit*, we ſhou'd likewiſe celebrate the Feaſt in an *upper Room*, and only at *Night*, nor muſt there be more than thirteen *Communicants*.

2. *Becauſe they order the Sacrament to be adminiſtred to the Sick*; *and admit it to be done to two or three Perſons, where there is no Church preſent.* We cannot ſuppoſe that the *Apoſtle*, when he adviſes the *Sick* to ſend for their *Miniſter* to *pray* over them, did prohibit them to *receive the Sacrament*, which the *Primitive Chriſtians* did every Day. But on the contrary, that notwithſtanding their *Sickneſs* they ſhou'd neither think themſelves *excus'd* from *their Duty*, nor be *debarred* the *Exerciſe* of it. *Euſebius* mentions the *Holy Sacraments*, being ſent to a *ſick Perſon* by a Boy (the Prieſt at that Time being ſick alſo) for which Reaſon it obtain'd the Name of a *Viaticum*, *a Proviſion for the Way they were going.*

Eccl. Hiſt. 6. 36. *See alſo* 77 & 78 Can. Concil. Carth. 4.

*This Ordinance*, *ſays the* Reaſoner, *ſhou'd be adminiſter'd only in the Church.* Now who's for Walls? I always thought the Church *itinerant* as well as *local*, and, that where *two or three were gather'd together* in the Name of *Chriſt*, there was the *Church*, and

*He*

*He* in the *midſt* of it. In his 5th Page the *Reaſoner* mentions a *Church in a Houſe*, 1 Cor. 16. 19. which he now ſeems to have forgotten. And when a *Church* is regularly form'd, what hinders the *Performance* of the *Offices* thereto belonging: So that unleſs he can prove *Sickneſs* to be an *unrepented Crime*, he can never be able to *diſqualify* the *Infirm* from *receiving the Sacrament*, even in their *own Houſes*. I could, moreover, inſtance in a famous *diſſenting Teacher*, of as *good Abilities* as our *Reaſoner*, who has given up this Point, by ſuffering this Sacrament to be adminiſter'd very lately in a *private Houſe*, to a *Gentleman* ſince deceas'd.

Page 16. 3. *Becauſe Perſons are allow'd to come to the Holy Ordinance to qualify themſelves for Places of Truſt or Profit.* I ſhall not follow a *great Example*, in finding Fault with my Superiors, where what they have enjoyn'd is not *morally Evil*. The learned *Dean of Chicheſter* has ſet this Matter in a clear Light, and fully juſtified the *Legiſlature* herein. I only add, I ſee no *Profanation* hereby, ſince it is made a *Teſt* only according to its *Original Deſign and Inſtitution*, viz. Of *Love* to *Chriſt*, and *Charity* to the *Brethren*.

*See his* Account of the Corporation and Teſt Acts.

Page 16. 4. *Becauſe they admit any Perſon that deſires it, and invite all on God's behalf: How this is done*, ſays the *Reaſoner*, *in God's behalf, we are at a loſs, till we find a Warrant for it in the Word of God.* I took the *Parable* of the *Net*

*Net thrown into the Sea; the Tares and the Wheat; the gathering together of the Good and the Bad, by the expreſs Order of the King*, to the Marriage Feaſt, were Warrants ſufficient for a *general* Invitation: If Perſons come *unprepar'd*, look they to it; the Fault is not the *Inviters*, who adviſe all to abſtain, and forbear coming, on *ſevere Penalties*, who have not *examin'd themſelves, and truly repented* them of all their *former Sins*, and *ſtedfaſtly* purpoſed *to lead a new Life, and have a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Chriſt, with a thankful remembrance of his Death, and are in Charity with all Men*, &c. So that it is *abſolutely falſe*, what the *Reaſoner* ſays, That *all we ask of our Communicants is, Whether they are in Charity with all Men?* Page 17. Neither is it ſufficient to juſtify *Separation of Communion*, to ſay with the *Reaſoner*, *Many of them live very wicked Lives, Swear and get Drunk the ſame Night that they have been at the Lord's Supper, and oft in the Week.* Page 17. In Things eſſential we muſt never argue from an *Abuſe* to a *Rejection*. Our *bleſſed Saviour*, 'tis probable, communicated with *Judas*, altho' he knew he would immediately commit the moſt *flagitious Piece of Wickedneſs in the World*: And if ever there was a *Dog*, in the *Reaſoner*'s Senſe, it was *he*. So that He ſhews himſelf unhappy again in applying Texts, *For give not that which is Holy unto Dogs*, means not *what* it is brought Page 17.

to prove; for our *Saviour* would not have contradicted his own Advice, by giving the *Sacrament* unto him that betray'd him, if that had been the Meaning of the Text; but the Words do ſhew the Pre-eminence of the *Jews* above the *Gentiles*, in having the *Goſpel* preach'd *firſt* unto them. Our *Saviour* himſelf thus explains the Text, when he ſays to the Woman, *It is*

Page 17. *not meet that ye take the Childrens Bread, and throw it to the Dogs*, aſſerting the Privileges of *Iſrael* before all the Nations of the *World* beſide; ſo that altho' many *unclean* Perſons preſent themſelves to *communicate*, the *Office* is not thereby *polluted*, nor the *Adminiſtration* made *ineffectual*: Sacraments are duly miniſtred, according to Chriſt's Appointment, although the Unworthy do partake of them: Which, as it hurts not the *pious* and *devout Receiver*, cannot be made a *lawful* Cauſe of *Separation*: For the *unworthy Receiver* does me no more harm by communicating with me, than the *Sacrament* it ſelf given me by an *unworthy Miniſter*, which our *Church*, in her 26th Article, ſays, *Hinders not the Effect of the Sacraments.*

Page 17. I ſhall take no Notice of his 5th *Reaſon*, unleſs he produces ſomething better than *bare Aſſertion*, which wanting *Proof*, does not carry ſo *honeſt a Face* with it, as ſo *grave* and *ſerious* a *Matter* ſhould have. Let the *Reaſoner*, if he can, ſhew our Departure

parture from thoſe *five Articles* he mentions, and I promiſe him he ſhall not want me for an *Adverſary*.

*We except againſt two Things eſpecially in the Order for the Burial of the Dead.* Reaſon 6. Page 18.

1. *They thank God for taking them away.* Is it not Matter of *Thankſgiving* to *God*, when our *Brother* is deliver'd from *Miſery?* So runs the Prayer; *We give thee hearty Thanks, for that it hath pleas'd thee to deliver this our Brother out of the Miſeries of this ſinful World.* But we *dare not thank God*, ſays the *Reaſoner*, *if a Man die in his Sins.* Why? Is not *God* to be praiſed for his *Judgments* as well as his *Mercies?* Judgments are deſign'd in *Mercy* to the *Survivors*, that they may *learn Righteouſneſs*, and ſurely merit *Thanks* at their Hands who ſo receive and make uſe of them: *When the Scorner is puniſhed* (ſays *Solomon*) *the Simple is made wiſe. And when the Wicked periſh there is ſhouting.* Prov. 21. 11. & 11. 10.

2. *Nor can we ſay, as they do, of every one, even the* vileſt Wretches *that they bury, that we have* ſure *and* certain Hope *of their Reſurrection to eternal Life.* We ſay no ſuch Thing; the Declaration is in *general*; that we have *ſure* and *certain Hope* of *the Reſurrection*, not *his Reſurrection* to *eternal Life*, which is plain from what follows, *viz. Through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall change* Page 18.

our, *not* his *vile Body.* The *Reaſoner* charges *home*, but not *fairly*; *their Reſurrection*, and *the Reſurrection*, are ſurely very wide aſunder; and, by conſidering them, he may, perhaps, be convinced, That the *Church of England* teaches no ſuch *unſcriptural* Doctrine, *That there is not one Soul goes to Hell that has the good luck to have Chriſtian Burial.* The aforemention'd Explanation ſhews *his Inference* to be wrong; beſides, our *Church abſolutely* denies that ever ſhe buries any *Souls* at all.

Reaſon 7. Page 18. *We withdraw from the Communion of the* Church of England, *becauſe we cannot allow of ſuch Officers in the Church, as Dioceſan, or Lord Biſhops. Clement* of *Alexandria* imagines, not improperly, That the *Terreſtrial Hierarchy* is form'd after the Model of the *Cæleſtial*, where *Biſhops*, *Prieſts*, and *Deacons*, differ from each other in Honour and Dignity, as one *Star differeth from another Star in Glory.* The *Reaſoner*, from another *miſquoted* Text, *roundly* affirms, That neither the *Scriptures*, nor the *firſt* and *pureſt* Ages of *Chriſtianity*, knew any *ſuch Office* in the *Church*; both which I take to be wrong; for the *Scripture* does make mention of *Biſhops*, and their *peculiar Province*, viz. to *Ordain*, to *Confirm*, and to *Excommunicate.* The ſame *Epiſcopal Powers* we find in *Scripture* committed to others, who from the *Tenor of Scripture*

In 6to. Strom.

1 Cor. 15. 41.

we

we judge to have been advanced to the ſame *Honour* and *Dignity*; as *Timothy* and *Titus*. The Teſtimony of *Antiquity* is intirely on our ſide; to go back to the Old Teſtament, and *the Church in the Wilderneſs* (becauſe we will be early enough) the *great Officers* of the Hoſt are in the Book of *Numbers* called, according to the *Septuagint* Tranſlation, ἐπίσκοποι; the *ſame Name* which St. *Peter* calls our Saviour, *viz.* the *Biſhop* or Superintendant. I bring this to ſhew, That ſince the *Name* was a *Name* of *Superior Office* and *Dignity*, even *before* Chriſtianity, the Primitive Chriſtians, 'tis likely, could not but know ſuch *Office* which the *Reaſoner* denies, becauſe He ſays *it was not an Office in the Church*; and I prove it was, by appealing to

Chap. 31. 14.

1 Pet. 2. 25.

*Clemens Romanus*, perhaps the earlieſt *Eccleſiaſtical Writer* ſince the Apoſtles, (whom our *Reaſoner* inſtances in to prove, That *Biſhops* and *Presbyters* were the ſame) who in his firſt *Epiſtle* to the *Corinthians*, which the very learned Archbiſhop *Uſher* allows to be *genuine*, written within Forty Years after our *Lord's Aſcenſion*, mentions *Biſhops* to have been *then* of *antient* ſtanding. *Ignatius*, another *Father* of the *firſt Century*, puts the Matter out of all doubt, in *all* his *Epiſtles* ſpeaking of the *Biſhop* as one of the *ſuperior Order*. Take One or Two for all. In his *Epiſtle* to the *Church* at *Smyrna*, after warning them

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them againſt *falſe Teachers*, and *Schiſmaticks*, *do all of you*, ſays he, *follow your* Biſhop, *as* Jeſus Chriſt *follow'd the* Father, *and follow the* Preſbytery *as the* Apoſtles, *and reverence the* Deacons *as attending upon holy Things*. To the *Epheſians* he writes thus, *Be obedient to the* Biſhop *and to* (not *or* to) *the* Presbytery, which puts a *manifeſt* Difference between the *Two* Orders. The *Apoſtolical Canons* attributed to the *Reaſoner's Clemens*, are full of the Diſtinction, and *Superior Honour* and *Dignity* of *Biſhops*, in that part of them which are *not ſuſpected*: Theſe, and a *Thouſand* other Inſtances, from the *Fathers* of the *Three firſt Centuries*, might be given to prove the *Apoſtolical* Inſtitution of *Biſhops*, as they *now* ſtand in the *Church* (except their Temporalities) maugre all the *weak* Efforts of *Salmaſius*, and the *wicked Ones* of our Country Man *Blondell* to the contrary: All which, beſides *collateral Evidence*, I am ready to produce, if the *Reaſoner* ſhall give me a more proper Opportunity than what falls within the Compaſs of this *Pamphlet*. Here I ſhall only ſubjoin what I take to be the miſtaken *Reaſon*, whereon is built the ſuppoſed *ſcriptural Identity* of *Presbyters* and *Biſhops*; *Presbyter* is a Name of *Age*, *Biſhop* of *Office*, and this Office, being *generally* conferr'd on Perſons of *advanc'd Years*, or *Experience*, that is on *Presbyters*, it came to paſs, that in the *Apoſtles Epiſtles*, and elſewhere, the Name of *Presbyter* is ſometimes uſed to ſignify the *ſame* as *Biſhop*:

*ſhop:* But it does by no means follow, that becauſe theſe Significations of *Biſhop* and *Presbyter* were ſometime *promiſcuouſly blended*, therefore they *never were*, nor *muſt be*, *diſtinct*, any more than *Flavus*, or *Purpureus*, muſt ceaſe to ſignify the *particular diſtinct Colours* of *Yellow* or *Purple*, becauſe common Uſage has brought them to expreſs any Thing that is *beautiful*, or *handſome*, or *graceful*, or *venerable*. I recommend to our *Reaſoner* the Conſideration of this Matter, and when he has well weigh'd it, he may, if he pleaſes, let me hear farther from him.

*We Diſſent, becauſe we cannot allow that the Biſhop or Patron ſhou'd impoſe a Paſtor upon any Pariſh, without the Conſent, or Choice of the People*, &c. This *Reaſon*, ſurely, will never juſtify a *Separation*, becauſe we have a great Number of Pariſhes, where the *People*, as they wou'd have it, do chooſe their own *Miniſter*; as does almoſt every *Pariſh* in *England*, where there is an *Afternoon Sermon:* But is this Cuſtom grounded upon the *Word of God?* Nothing leſs: So then, it ſeems, the Diſſenters can take up *a Cuſtom*, as *Cuſtom*, as well as their Neighbours; but the Inconvenience of *popular Elections* ſoon pleaded for its being laid aſide; while one was for *Paul*, another for *Apollos*, a third for *Cephas*, *were they not Carnal?* And how ought ſuch Things to be continued in the *Church?* Who ſo proper to pro- Reaſon 8: Page 19.

*provide* for the *Flock* as the *Biſhop* of that Flock? Or, Who more *likely* to provide a *fit* and *able Man* for the Church, than *he* who has had *Zeal enough* to *build one*, upon which the *Right* of *Lay Patronage* was, as I take it, *originally* founded? That the People did formerly *conſent*, is true; but that they did *ſui juris*, *nominate*, and *appoint*, is what our *Reaſoner* will hardly make appear; and, ſure he is not in earneſt, when he ſays, in the *Primitive Church* the *People* did *propoſe*, *name*, *elect*, and *decree*: And to prove it, thus, ſays he, a Thouſand Years after *Chriſt's Aſcenſion* (that is, I ſuppoſe, in the *Primitive Church*) *the Council of* Nice *decreed*, That if any *Biſhop* deceaſe, any other *reconciled* to the *Church* may be admitted, provided *they be worthy*, *and the People do chooſe them*. I muſt inform my *Reader* firſt, This was not a *Decree* of that *Council* for a *ſtanding Rule* to future Times, as the *Canons* were, nor is it to be found among them. But it is a Paſſage out of their *Synodical Epiſtle*, to thoſe of *Alexandria* and *Ægypt*, relating to a *particular Caſe*; ſo that, although at firſt ſight it looks as if the *Council* had declared the *Right* of *Election* to be in the *People*, we ſhall upon a fair Examination find it to be *quite otherwiſe*.

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The Caſe was as follows. The *Council* declares their Tenderneſs towards thoſe that had been made *Biſhops* and *Prieſts* in the *Meletian Schiſm*, allowing their Orders upon due Submiſſion

miſſion, but not ſuffering them to exerciſe any *Juriſdiction* to the Prejudice of *thoſe* in *Poſſeſſion*; but if any *Biſhops* died, thoſe *Meletian Biſhops* might ſucceed, with theſe three *Proviſoes*.

*Firſt*, That they be *judged worthy*. By whom? By the *People?* No certainly, for then there had been no need of the following Clauſe, *viz. And the People chuſe them:* Therefore this *Judgment* belonged to the *Biſhops* of the *Province*, according to this Order.

The *Second* Condition is, *If the People chuſe them:* What People? The *Meletian* Party? No; they were excluded, becauſe of their being in *Schiſm*, from having any Thing to do in the Choice, although they were *admitted* to *Communion*. They are forbidden in the *Epiſtle* we are ſpeaking of, To *put up the Names of Perſons to be choſen, or to hold up their Hands*; and ſo all *Right* of *Suffrage*, as I ſaid before, was taken from them on account of their *Schiſm:* So that what *Right of Choice* was in the *People*, was only in the *ſound* and *untainted Party*; and after all it was no more than a *Nomination* by the *People*, for the *true Right* of *Election* was ſtill in the *Biſhops*.

Becauſe, *Thirdly*, All this ſignified nothing without the Conſent of the *Biſhop* of *Alexandria*, which was the third *Proviſo*.

And now I ask, Whether the *Reaſoner* has dealt ingenuouſly, by mentioning *that part* of the *Epiſtle* only which *ſeems* to make for the *Right* of *Election* in the *People*, and leaving

out the *other Two*, which reduce it to a bare *Nomination only*, the *Meletian* Party too excluded? Wou'd thoſe among us who contend for *popular Elections*, like them upon thoſe Terms? And theſe are the very Terms of the *Nicene Council*, which the *Reaſoner* has miſtaken to be of his Side. It is one Thing for the *People* to *nominate* and *propoſe* Perſons to be choſen; and another, for them to have the *Right* of *Election*: And it is one Thing, for a Perſon choſen to have the *Conſent* of the *People* (as the *Clergy* of the *Church of England* have) and another, for them to have the *Power* to *reject* him, becauſe he doth not pleaſe them. And a ain, it is one Thing for the *People* to be allowed to enjoy *ſome Privileges*, till the Inconveniencies of them have made them be taken away by *juſt Laws*; and another, for them to *challenge* ſuch a *Right* as *inherent in themſelves*, and without which there lies no Obligation on them to ſubmit.

If theſe Things were better underſtood, it would allay ſome Mens Heats about theſe Matters; for granting, That in the Time of the *Council* of *Nice*, the *People* had the Liberty of *propoſing Names*, or *objecting* againſt the Perſon to be *choſen*; and although their Conſent was generally *deſired*, yet all this does not put the *Right* of *Election* in them; for all that they could do ſignified nothing, without the Conſent of the *Biſhops* and *Metropolitan*; and none are properly ſaid to *chuſe*, but *thoſe* upon whoſe

Judg-

Judgment, the *Determination* depends, the reſt do but *propoſe*, and *offer* Perſons to be choſen. So that the utmoſt the *People* could have by this *Indulgence*, was but a *Right* of *Nomination*, which upon *Seditions* and *Tumults* was juſtly altered: And there can be no Plea for reſuming it, unleſs it be proved to be a *Divine* and *Unalterable Right*, which can never be done (although the *Reaſoner* calls it the *Liberty which God has given them*, which lies upon him to prove) nor is ſo much as *pretended* by thoſe who ſeem to court the *Peoples Favour*, by pleading for *popular Elections* at this Day, from the *Precedents* of former Times.

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*See* Stillingfleet's *Antiq. of the* Britiſh *Churches*, p. 96.

The *Reaſoner*'s Simile in this Caſe, of *impoſing an Husband upon every Woman in the Pariſh*, to which He compares the Right of Patronage, wou'd, indeed, be an *intolerable Impoſition*, but ſuits not the Power of *Patronage* a hundredth part ſo well as *diſſenting Teachers* practiſe, who generally know to a *Shilling* the Value of every *Ewe Lamb* in their Fold, and no being taken thence without their *Approbation* at leaſt, for fear of their 9th *Reaſon*, which is

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*Godly Diſcipline*; the *want* of which we are deeply ſenſible of, and do *ſorely lament*; and when it ſhall pleaſe *God* to put it into the Heart of our *Gracious Sovereign* to

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ſuffer our *Convocation* to *aſſemble* and *do Buſineſs*, we doubt not to ſee a *happy Reſtoration* of it. In the mean Time, 'tis no *Juſtification* of thoſe who *diſſent*, as the *Reaſoner* ſays it is, becauſe our *Church* wants *godly Diſcipline*. Where there is *no Law* Men muſt be a *Law unto themſelves*, according to their *Apprehenſions* of *Good* and *Evil*. Moreover, 'tis ungenerous to upbraid us with the want of what *they themſelves* have help'd to *leſſen* and *diminiſh*. The higheſt *Eccleſiaſtical Puniſhment* is *Excommunication*, the Terror of which is wonderfully leſſen'd by the *Diſſenters Separation*: For can it be ſuppoſed, that a *wicked Man* will regard *Excluſion* from *one Congregation*, when he can be receiv'd by *ſeveral* who call themſelves *Faithful?* I chuſe to draw a Veil over what follows, becauſe I own I am not provided of a Defence, if thoſe Things be true, *pudet hæc opprobria*, &c. but *even ſo* is not their *Separation juſtified*; unleſs their being *Separatiſts* did exempt them from the *Juriſdiction* they find fault with ſo much.

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Reaſon 10. Page 21. *Laſtly*, ſays the *Reaſoner*, *We leave the* Church of England, *becauſe it hath often ſhewn a perſecuting Spirit*. The Spirit of our Church is beſt known by her *Doctrines*, which ſavour of nothing *leſs* than Perſecution; but, if I miſtake not, the *Reaſoner* has a View to the Laws in force for her *Eſtabliſhment*: They are made for a *Defence*, indeed, to *her*, but not an *Offence*

*fence* to any *others*, that is not the *Deſign* of them. I am ſure the *Reaſoner* and his *Printer*, are preſent Inſtances of her *Forbearance* and *Charity*, ſince almoſt *every Page* in his Book is *actionable*, either for *Falſhood* or *Slander*; but I forbear to recriminate, being taught by the *Church* he ſo much *reviles*, to bring a *railing Accuſation*, no not againſt *the Devil himſelf:* But ſuppoſe what he ſays true, yet a *perſecuting Spirit* is no juſt ground for a *Separation*. Our *Bleſſed Lord* was led out of the *Synagogue* to have his *Neck broken*, yet did he not *withdraw* from the *Synagogue*, and plead *Perſecution*. Neither can he mention *one* ſingle *Text* which warrants a *Defection* upon that ſcore; ſo that this is no *Reaſon* at all, but a *Schiſmatical Pretence*, which is *now* alſo removed by his *own Confeſſion*, for his Charge is for what *is paſt*, and he ſaith not it ſheweth the *ſame Spirit now*; ſo that *were* the *Reaſon* once good, yet it *ceaſes* at preſent, and muſt be thrown aſide as *inſignificant* and *uſeleſs*.

But I find I have miſapprehended the *Reaſoner*, in imagining he ſaw farther than I find he does, for all this Cry of *Perſecution* comes from the *Ceremonies of the Church*, which he falſly affirms, *are made Terms of Communion and Salvation*, notwithſtanding we declare them in their *own Nature indifferent Things*. Indeed they ceaſe to be *indifferent* when they have received the *Sanction* of *Authority* for their Uſe, becauſe we think it our *Duty* to obey our *Go-*

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*Governors*: For whatſoever *I may do*, or *forbear*, in Compaſſion to my Brother's *Infirmity*, that certainly I *muſt do*, or *forbear*, in reverence to *God's Ordinance*, which is the *lawful Magiſtrate*. But although the Ceremonies of the Church do thus ceaſe to be *indifferent*, we do not *thruſt them*, as the *Reaſoner* ſays, *upon the Diſſenters*, as *eſſentially* neceſſary, but *modeſtly convenient* only. And in ſo doing we do not go contrary to the *Apoſtles* Practice, when he ſays, 1 *Cor.* 8. 18. *I will eat no Fleſh*, &c. which Text our *Reaſoner* brings for aboliſhing the *Church Ceremonies* to oblige the *Diſſenter*.

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*Serious and Compaſſionate Enquiry into the Cauſes of the preſent Neglect and Contempt of the C. of* England.

Indeed every private Chriſtian is bound in *Charity* and *Compaſſion* to a *weak Brother*, to deny himſelf ſome Part of his *Liberty* to pleaſe and gain him: But then it muſt be *only* in thoſe Things which are not commanded by *any Law*, but left *free* and *undetermined*: In *theſe* Things the *Apoſtle*'s *Rule* muſt take Place; *We that are ſtrong ought to bear the Infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves. And let every one of us pleaſe his Neighbour, for his Good, to Edification.* In *ſuch* Things, I ſay, as are not *Matter* of any *Law*; for if they *be*, I have no ſuch *diſpenſing Power* committed to me, as to break through an Ordinance, either of *God* or *Man*, to pleaſe my *weak* or *peeviſh* Brother; this would be *to do Evil that Good may*

Rom. 15. 12.

*may come of it*, committing *Sacrilege* to give *Alms*; which ought by no manner of Means to be encouraged, becauſe *God* has forbidden it. But in ſuch Things, where the *Laws* both of *God* and *Man* have left me at liberty, and at my *own* diſpoſe, I *may juſtly*, and *ought* in Charity, to conſider my *Brother*'s *Weakneſs*, rather than uſe my *own Strength*; and not walk over Rocks and Precipices, where I know the *Infirmities* of others is ſuch, that they cannot follow me, or climb up to, without *Giddineſs* and *Danger of falling*.

To do all that I *may* do without danger to my ſelf, and not *at all* to regard what others *can* comply with, is to be *unchriſtian* and *uncharitable*. It is to *ſurfeit* of my *own Abundance* when my *Brother* is in *want*: And in this Senſe *only*, we are to underſtand the Admonitions of the *Apoſtle* in the Caſe of *Scandal* or *Offence*. In his Times the *Magiſtrate* being *Heathen*, took no Care of the *Church*, nor paſſed any *Laws* concerning the *Manage* of the Worſhip of God: Therefore every Thing was *free* and *undetermined* that *God* had left ſo: So that *Chriſtians* had a great deal more ſcope and room for mutual Condeſcenſion *then*, than they have *now*; accordingly the *Apoſtle* exhorts them, that in all that *Matter of Liberty* they ſhou'd *by Love ſerve one another*: And with great Equity; for he that will *give Offence* to his Brother, by doing that which he can *omit* without *Sin*, is guilty of a *Sin* in ſo doing. But the Caſe is *quite otherwiſe*

*wiſe* when there is a *Law* in being; for if my *Brother* will be *offended* unleſs I *break a Law* to *comply* with him, in this Caſe *Charity begins at home*, I muſt look to my *ſelf* firſt, and if he takes *Offence*, he takes it where it is not given, for I do *but my Duty*. And as I may, and muſt, give Alms of what is my *own*, but am neither bound to deprive my ſelf of *Neceſſaries* to ſerve any Man's *Needs*, much leſs to *rob* another of his *Right* to furniſh him that *Wants*; ſo the *ſame Charity* requires, that in all thoſe Caſes where no *Law* of *God* or *Man* hath *reſtrained* my Liberty, I there conſider the *Infirmity* of *another* rather than the *pleaſing* of my *ſelf*. And that this is St. *Paul*'s Doctrine, appears by the *Reaſoner*'s Quotation, with which the *Apoſtle* concludes the Argument: *If Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Fleſh while the World ſtandeth, leſt I make my Brother to offend.* The *eating* of *Fleſh* was under no *Law*, and conſequently he ſhould not *offend* if he *abſtain'd* from it; therefore, ſays he, *If Meat make my Brother to offend*, if he be ſcandalized at me for *eating Fleſh*, ſince I may *do it* or *let it alone*, I will condeſcend to his *Weakneſs*, and abridge my ſelf of my Liberty, in this Point, for his ſake. *I will eat no Fleſh.*

1 Cor. 8. 13.

But ſuppoſe the *eating of Fleſh* had been commanded by a *Law* of *God* or *Man*, and a *weak Brother* had been *offended* at it, what would the *Apoſtle* have done in this Caſe? Can we think Compaſſion for his *Brother* would have made him

him forget *Charity* to *himſelf*? No, no; his wiſhing *himſelf accurſed for the Brethren*, was a token of his Zeal; but I beg leave to underſtand it *hyperbolically*. His Monitions and Advices to *ſubmit* our *ſelves to every Ordinance of Man*, and *to obey them that have the Rule over us*, do ſufficiently ſhew, That he would have had regard to poſitive Inſtitutions, although *Human*, and choſen rather to *obey* them, than out of Compliance to any Man's *Weakneſs*, neglected the Performance of *a known* Duty. Dr. *Donne* (as I remember) brings this very Text to the Ceremonies of the Church. His Words are theſe. " When leaving *fundamental Things, and neceſſary Truths*, we " wrangle uncharitably about *collateral Impertinencies*; when we will refuſe to do *ſuch* " *Things* as will conduce to the *Exaltation* of " *Devotion*, or the *Order* and *Peace* of the " *Church*, not for any *Harm in the Things*, but " only *therefore* becauſe *Papiſts* do them; " when, becauſe they *kneel* in the *Worſhip of* " *the Bread in the Sacrament*, we will not *kneel* " in *Thankſgiving to God for the Sacrament*; " when, becauſe they *pray* to *Saints*, we will " not *name the Saints*, or *reproach* the *Saints*; " when, becauſe they *abuſe* the *Croſs*, we will " *abhor* the *Croſs*: *This is that which St.* Paul " *proteſts againſt.*

Rom. 9. 3.

1 Pet. 2. 13. Heb. 13. 17.

Vol. 2. 145.

Upon the whole then it appears, If the *Ceremonies* in Uſe in the *Church* of *England*, at which our *diſſenting Brethren* are *offended*, were of the *ſame Nature* with *eating of Fleſh*; that is, enjoyn'd by *no Law*, we ſhould lay them aſide for peaceable Conſiderations, in Condeſcenſion to the *Infirmities* of others: But ſince the *Nature* of them is *quite different*, and they are become our *Duty*, by being *authoritatively* enjoyned us, we conceive that we give no *juſt Cauſe of Offence* to our *weak Brethren*, by retaining them; foraſmuch as Compliance with an *Ordinance of God*, muſt *always* be preferred to yielding to the *Requeſts* of Man. And if they will ſeparate from our *Communion*, partly becauſe we thus chuſe to *obey God rather than Man*; whether this be *right in the ſight of God*, let *themſelves* be Judges.

'Tis antient *Policy* to give a *good Perſon*, or *Thing*, a *bad Name*, or *Term* of *Reproach*, which has had its effect among inconſiderate People: *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* And, *Can any good Thing come out of* Nazareth? Such Sayings prejudiced a great many People againſt our *Saviour* and his *Doctrine*: In like manner, the *Ceremonies* of *our Church* are, by an *unwarrantable Reflexion*, called *Human Inventions*. Whereas, ſince they are deſigned for the Promotion of Piety, and are not contrary to the pure Word of God, and are agreeable to *Primitive* Practice, they ought not

Mat. 13. 55. John 1. 46.

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not to be called *Human Inventions*, but *Rules of Eccleſiaſtical Wiſdom and Diſcretion*. Let the *Diſſenters* conſider them under this Denomination, and, I dare ſay, they will have a better Opinion of them.

If Purity of Worſhip be promoted by the removal of *Ceremonies*, as the *Diſſenters* imagine, it will follow, That the more *external Forms* are removed, the more *Pure* will the Worſhip of *God* be; and ſo the *Quakers* will come in for the *pureſt Worſhippers*, having removed *Sacraments*, and all *external Forms*, and endeavoured, as *George Fox* ſays, to *bring the Peoples Minds out of all Viſibles*. Nay, and ſo the Sacrament under *one Kind* only, muſt be Purer than the Sacrament under *both*, becauſe *Purity* is oppoſed to *Compoſition*; which is a Conſequence fairly drawn from the removal of external Forms, but I truſt, not to be granted either by *Diſſenter* or *Church Man*.

I have, for the *preſent*, done with the *Reaſoner*, and *commend* Him and his Party *to God, and to the Power of his Grace*, and to a ſerious Conſideration of *theſe Things*: The *Peace* of the *Church* (the laſt and beſt earthly Legacy that our *Saviour* left it) is not to be broken for *Trifles*. *My Brethren, if the Prophet had bid you do ſome great Thing, would you not have done it? How much more when he ſaith then, Waſh and be clean.* If the *Church* of *England* had im- 2 Kings 5. 13.

poſed *hard* Terms of Communion, enforced with ſevere Penalties for the refuſal, would you not have *complied?* How much more then ought you to take her *Yoak upon you*, which is like our *Saviour's*, *eaſy*; and like His *Burden*, *light?*

Had *our Reformers*, when they drew us off from the *Church* of *Rome*, given your *firſt Reaſon* for ſo doing, *viz. Becauſe we do not look upon it to be ſo pure a Church as ſome others are*; had they, *I ſay*, given *this* as a *Reaſon*, and no better, I am apt to think that *Work of the Lord* had not *proſpered* ſo well in their Hands; for where is that *Text* in *Scripture* which authorizes a Departure from a *pure Church*, becauſe it is not *ſo pure?* That is, *becauſe it wants ſome Degrees of Purity*: There never was that *Church* upon Earth, whoſe *Inſtitutions* have been *ſo pure*, as to arrive at *Perfection*, nor ever will, unleſs the Doctrine of the *Milleniſts* be found *true*. And of all the *famous Schiſms* and *Separations*, I ever met with, not *one* hath been ſupported by ſo *ſqueamiſh* and *wanton* a *Reaſon* as this, *refuſing to be pure, becauſe they* could not be *ſo pure*. This ſurely, if any Thing be, is *thinking of Men above that which is written*, which the *Apoſtle*, in the preſent Caſe, cautions his *Corinthians* not to do. To *ſeparate* from a *Church* whoſe *Terms* of Communion are *ſinful*, or which has *perverted*, or *rejected*, the *pure Word of God*, or required *implicit Faith* and *Obedience*

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*dience* in, and to *Human* Decisions, or whose *Worship* is *idolatrous*, &c. is undoubtedly *lawful*, nay, 'tis our *Duty*; *For what Agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean Thing, and I will receive you.* 2 Cor. 6. 17.

This was the Case between *us* and the *Church* of *Rome*, when we *brake her Bonds asunder, and cast away her Cords from us:* And we think our selves, nay, we are sure, we are sufficiently justified by the foregoing Text, among others. But the Case is not so between *us* and *you*; you acknowledge *our Church* to be a *pure Church*, and to separate from *such* a *Church* for want of a *Degree of Purity*, is doing *apparent Evil*, for no more than the *Chance* of an *ensuing Good:* 'Tis breaking through all the Institutes of *Christ* and his *Gospel*; for *Unity*, *Peace*, *brotherly Love*, *Charity*, which are *real* Virtues, and *heavenly* Qualifications, and as such are true Marks of true *Christian Zeal*, and a *Christian Church*; I say 'tis breaking through all these for I know not what —— nor your *Reasoner* neither; for if such a *want* of *Purity* will *justify* a *Separation*, there can be no *such Thing* as a *sinful Separation* from any *Church whatever*, because there is *no Church so pure*, as he weakly imagines, but some fault or other may be found with its Institutions: Nor will he dare to affirm, That, *those others* He speaks of, are the *purest Churches* in the World;

World; becauſe the *beſt Church* upon Earth, ſo far as it is *Human*, muſt be defective, and fall ſhort of *Purity* and *Perfection*.

This *ſingle* Conſideration duly improved, *may*, by God's Aſſiſtance, go a great Way towards convincing you of your *Duty*, to *return to our Church*, or *muſt* oblige you to ſhew *better Reaſons* for the *Continuance* of your *Separation*.

*FINIS.*

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